Fundamental Skills for Case Managers

A Self-Study Guide

UNIT 4:
ASSESSMENTS AND INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLANS (ISPs)

Center for Health Training

UNIT 4: Assessments and Individual Service Plans (ISPs)

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UNIT 4: ASSESSMENTS AND INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLANS (ISPS)

Overview and Instructions

This unit provides case managers with a basic approach to use when conducting client assessments and developing individual service plans (ISPs). It is the last of four units and is divided into five chapters:

1. Client Assessment
2. Developing Individual Service Plans
3. Follow-Up
4. Supporting Through Referrals
5. Putting It All Together

Each chapter except "Putting It All Together" includes *Learning Objectives, Things to Think About*, *Guidelines for Practice,* and a number of activities to reinforce the information provided.

Please complete the *Pre-Test* before you begin. As you read through this unit, complete all of the activities and conclude by completing the *Post-Test*.

You will be asked to demonstrate the skills you have learned for your supervisor, either by practicing a role-play or by being observed with a client during an appointment or home visit. Your supervisor will use the *Observation Skills Checklist for Supervisors* at the end of this unit as a guide. Your supervisor will document your completion of this unit using the enclosed *Supervisor Sign-Off Sheet*. Your supervisor will not read your responses – only confirm that you have done the activities and correct your *Post-Test*.

I. Client Assessment

Learning Objectives:
After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Identify three strategies for gathering client information
2. Explain the importance of utilizing a variety of sources of information
3. Demonstrate how to prioritize information

Assessment is a two-part process. In the first part of the process, you gather information about your client through questioning, listening, observation, and other sources. In the second part, you use the information you have gathered to develop a description of the client's status including her/his strengths, needs, resources, and challenges. Effective assessment provides a solid foundation for the work you will do with your clients as you help them identify goals and create strategies for achieving them.

A. Gathering Information

Assessment begins at the moment when you first receive information about a prospective client. Usually, a written or verbal referral of the client to your program initiates the process. This referral generally includes demographic information about the client, such as age, address and telephone numbers if available, and other pertinent data to initiate contact. You may also receive sensitive information about your client such as her/his immigration status and history of sexual activity, substance use, and physical abuse or assault. This preliminary data provides you with a framework for gathering the rest of the information you need to make a comprehensive assessment of the client's needs and resources.

Be careful not to form conclusions or judgments about clients based solely on preliminary information. During the intake interview and baseline assessment, and throughout your relationships with your clients, you will receive information that confirms, clarifies, or even cancels out the information you received at the point of the referral.

In AFLP and ASPPP, the initial referral of a client to you is followed by an intake interview and comprehensive baseline assessment, standard components of the process of collecting and documenting client information. Each provides a structure for getting to know more about the client.

Intake Interview

The intake interview varies from agency to agency, but most interviews include questions about clients' behaviors, living situations, medical issues, service needs and barriers, and other important areas of their lives. This helps you learn about their current status, their life histories, their resources and strengths, and their needs, as well as the needs of their children, if applicable.

Comprehensive Baseline Assessment

The comprehensive baseline assessment, completed within 30 days of each client's consent to participate, provides an opportunity for you to get more detailed information using open-ended questions. In conjunction with the intake interview, it touches on many different areas of your clients' lives, including their education, health, employment, nutrition, psychosocial and health education needs. With pregnant or parenting clients, you will want to explore their parenting styles or feelings about the pregnancy, their partners' expectations about parenthood, and the kind of support that is available to them from their family and friends. With sibling clients, you will want to explore their perspectives on their siblings' pregnancies and parenting experiences, their own sexual relationships, and their future goals and aspirations.

Keep in mind that the intake interview and comprehensive baseline assessment are tools for collecting information in the early stages of your relationships with clients. You may find that clients share personal information with you more freely and honestly after several visits, when you have begun to develop rapport. (See "Building Rapport," on page 9 of Unit 1.) Your clients' cultural backgrounds may affect their comfort levels in responding to certain assessment questions. (See "Bias and Cultural Sensitivity," on page 23 of Unit 2.) Their developmental stages may also impact the ways in which they communicate with you. (See Unit 3 for a detailed discussion of adolescent development.)

Using Multiple Sources of Information

Using multiple sources of information increases your ability to provide effective services to your clients. Family members, boyfriends and girlfriends, social workers, teachers, counselors, and others can all provide information and perspectives that enhance your understanding of your clients' needs, strengths, supports, and challenges. Medical, school, and court records can also be useful. Developing a more complete picture of your clients and their situations helps you better determine what resources and interventions are appropriate.

Client Confidentiality and Consent
Maintaining client confidentiality is essential when gathering information from sources other than the client. (See page 31 of Unit 1 for a detailed discussion of confidentiality.) Clients must provide written consent in order for you to collect or exchange any client-specific information with others, except as required of you by law as a mandated reporter. To ease clients' concerns and anxieties about your gathering or sharing personal information, clearly explain your reasons for doing so. Reassure them that you will only request or share information with their written consent. Be sure to explain to other providers your reasons for requesting client information. By gathering only the information that is most relevant to your work with clients, you develop a more thorough understanding of their needs while still respecting their privacy.

Service Providers as Information Sources
Many clients participate in more than one program or are involved with other service providers. These professionals can be a valuable source of information about your clients. The information they provide can help you avoid "reinventing the wheel" by duplicating work that has already been done. Talking with other providers also helps you coordinate client services more effectively.

Records
If available, records, files, and other written documents are another helpful source of information. With client permission, you may be able to receive copies of documents such as medical records, court orders, birth certificates, or school attendance reports. These documents can be useful in helping you advocate on behalf of clients or link them with needed services. Ask your supervisor about sources of information in your community and how to use them. Be aware that most agencies and organizations permit access to personal records only with specific authorization.

ACTIVITY: Using Multiple Information Sources

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following vignettes, and identify two possible sources of additional information. Describe what you would do to obtain the information and what type of information you would request.

Vignette: Nicole is a 14-year-old sibling. She lives with her parents, her 16-year-old sister, and her sister's 1-year-old son. From time to time, Nicole stays with her aunt, who lives in a neighboring town. Nicole attends 8th grade at Far Valley Middle School.

1. What information would be useful to gather regarding Nicole? ______________

____

Information source: ____

What steps need to be taken to access information from this source? __________

____

What specific information would you request? ____________________________

____

2. What additional information might you find useful from another information source?

____

Information source: ____

What steps need to be taken to access information from this source? __________

____

What kind of information would you request?____________________________

____

continued next page

Vignette: Terrance is 16 years old. He lives in a group home. Terrance's 1-month-old twin daughters were born prematurely and have been in the hospital since birth. Terrance completed 9th grade at Middletown High School.

1. What information would be useful to gather regarding Terrance? ____________

____

Information source: ____

What steps need to be taken to access information from this source? __________

____

What specific information would you request? ___________________________

____

2. What additional information might you find useful from another information source?

____

Information source: ____

What steps need to be taken to access information from this source? __________

____

What kind of information would you request?_____________________________

____

Reliable Practices

Making accurate assessments depends on using reliable practices. These include:

- Communicating effectively
- Using your eyes and ears
- Prioritizing information

Communicating Effectively

In "Unit 1: Essential Communication Skills," you learned how to ask questions, listen effectively, and respond with empathy when getting to know your clients. Having a solid foundation in basic communication is essential when working with adolescents. Remember that effective communication involves giving information as well as receiving it. In the early stages of the assessment process, however, you be should be prepared to do more listening than talking.

Sometimes clients say things you don't understand or use a word or phrase that's unfamiliar to you. When that happens, don't be shy about asking the client to clarify or explain. It is much better to feel silly and get clarification than not to ask and miss important information. Even if you've heard the word or phrase used before, it is important to know what it means to this particular client.

Using Your Eyes and Ears

By looking and listening carefully, you gain additional information that enhances the assessment process. When you are in a client's home, look around casually from wherever you are sitting and take in the home environment. Ask yourself:

- Are basic needs being met?
- Are electricity, clean water, and heating available?
- Does the environment pose any dangers to children? Are there broken toys or furniture? Are safety gates needed to block off stairways and other unsafe areas?
- Are there dangers at the baby's level, such as coins on the floor?
- Is the environment child-friendly, with age-appropriate toys?
- How much furniture is there?
- Is there open space? Is it crowded?
- What is the space like?
- Who lives in the home? Relatives? Friends? Pets?
- Is it light or dark?
- What is the activity level? Is it loud or quiet?
- Are there unsanitary conditions, such as food on the floor or dishes with food lying out?

At a later time, explore with your client whether your observations are reflective of what occurs in the home on a daily basis.

Your eyes and ears can also help you determine how the client responds to the home environment. Is s/he alert? Overwhelmed? Distracted? How does s/he interact with family members, friends, partner or spouse, and children? Listen for tone of voice, and look at affect, facial expression, and body language. Your senses of sight and hearing are important tools in gathering information to assist you in best addressing the client's needs.

ACTIVITY: Using Your Senses

INSTRUCTIONS: The next time you visit someone's home, see how much and what kind of information you can take in without asking questions, simply by using your senses. Ask yourself the following questions after you leave:

- **Were paintings, prints, photos, or other decorations displayed?**
- **Was there carpeting or rugs, or were the floors bare?**
- **Did the home have windows, and if so, were they open or closed?**
- **Were there curtains, blinds, or other window coverings? If so, were they open or closed?**
- **Were there books, newspapers, or magazines?**
- **Was there a pet?**
- **What sounds did you hear?**
- **What smells did you notice?**

Based on your observations, what is your overall impression of this environment?

____

____

Prioritizing Information

It is easy to get overwhelmed by details and miss information that is most pertinent to helping clients at the present time. Prioritizing the information you receive from and about clients is essential. You may choose to do this formally, by writing things down, or informally, by making mental notes of what you think your client's most pressing issues are.

Example: On your first visit with Susan, she tells you that she is in school, although she does not attend regularly. Her boyfriend is just out of jail, and they are sexually active, but not contracepting. Her sister, Jeanine, is in the room and tells you that Susan recently attempted suicide. Susan wants to become more involved with group activities at your program.

To determine which information should take the highest priority, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does this information pertain to the safety of the client, her children, or others?

   Give highest priority to information that indicates possible danger, abuse, neglect, or threats or acts of violence. As a mandated reporter, you are required by law to report any information that suggests danger to the client or others.

2. Does this information support or hinder the client's progress toward her/his goals?

   Look at the relevance and possible impact of the information on the client's decision-making, behavior, and actions.

3. Does this information change my assessment of the client's needs, strengths, resources, supports, and challenges?

With newly received information, you may modify your assessment or make no changes at all. Keep in mind that it is fairly typical for your initial assessment to change over time as you receive new information.

Based on the answers to these questions, assess the priority level of the various pieces of information the client has given you. Remember to always address client risk factors first.

In the example given above, you would need to give highest priority to the client's risk of suicide. While her other issues are important, they are secondary to the potential danger posed to the client by her suicidal impulses. Once suicide prevention measures have been taken, you can begin to work with Susan on issues such as her high-risk sexual behavior and spotty school attendance, which may hinder her progress toward her goals. Finally, be sure to follow up on Susan's stated desire to become more involved with your program by providing her with information about upcoming group activities.

Be sure to make a note of the areas that the client expresses interest in, as well as areas that you would like to return to for further conversation. Obtain any additional information or clarifications that you need from the client or other sources to help you move forward. Make sure that you get back to the client with any materials, information, or answers to questions in a timely fashion.

B. Making Your Assessment

In the second part of the assessment process, you use the information you have gathered about a client to describe her/his general status at this time. Your assessment is your best judgment of the client's:

- Strengths
- Needs
- Support
- Challenges
- Resources

Although your assessment is based on your own interpretation of the client and her/his situation, it should be similar to the assessment that another person with similar skills and work experiences would make of that client.

An assessment is client-specific and should be based on each client's own unique circumstances and realities. Avoid making generalizations or broad, sweeping interpretations to describe what might be going on. For example, "Darryl stays in the house most of the time. Therefore, he is depressed and needs therapy." Staying inside may not necessarily be a sign of depression, but may point to other issues such as personal safety concerns or the lack of availability of neighborhood youth programs.

Take time to identify the client's strengths, as well as areas where s/he may benefit from additional assistance. (See pages 3-5 of Unit 1 for a discussion of resiliency, recognizing client strengths, and protective factors.) Remember that assessment should be based on client information and your nonjudgmental interpretation of that information.

ACTIVITY: Making an Assessment

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the vignette below, and make an initial assessment of the client's strengths, needs, support, challenges, and resources:

Vignette: **Tameka is 15 years old. She is 6 months pregnant with her first child. She alternates between living with her mother and living with her boyfriend's older sister. Andre, her boyfriend and the father of the baby (FOB), is 17 years old.**

Tameka has made most of her prenatal care appointments. Andre goes with her when he isn't working. Since learning of her pregnancy, she has tried to eat more balanced meals and has reduced her cigarette smoking to one to two cigarettes each day. Before the pregnancy, Tameka was on track to finish her sophomore year of high school.

Strengths: ____

Needs: ____

Support: ____

Challenges: ____

Resources: ____

Client Assessment

Things to Think About

- How do you begin the process of asking a client for personal information?
- What does it feel like to have an unfamiliar person in your home?
- What is the difference between giving a personal opinion and making an assessment?
- What does it feel like when a professional asks you personal questions? How do you feel when s/he writes down your answers?
- How do you tell the difference between relevant and irrelevant information?
- What do you do when you receive too much information at one time?

Guidelines for Practice

- ✯ Begin the assessment process at the moment you first receive any client information.
- ✯ Use your senses to gather information.
- ✯ Gather information from a variety of sources.
- ✯ Stay as objective as possible.
- ✯ Be aware of how cultural influences the assessment process
- ✯ Be aware of your client's developmental stage.
- ✯ Address high-priority needs first.
- ✯ Identify areas where you need additional information to move forward.
- ✯ Revise your assessment as you receive new and relevant information.
- ✯ Use the first visit to develop a deeper understanding of the client's needs and resources.

2. Developing Individual Service Plans

Learning Objectives:

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Identify the six components of ISP development
2. Give an example of a goal, an objective, a timeline, and a service need
3. Identify two ways to initiate a discussion about goals
4. Demonstrate how to respond to different priority and interest levels
5. Explain the importance of establishing attainable action steps and realistic timelines

A. The Big Picture

Once you have completed the client assessment, you are ready to work with the client to create a plan of action. The Individual Service Plan (ISP) is an action plan that structures the setting of goals and the steps and timelines that will enable the client to achieve them. It is a fluid document that reflects the unique and changing needs of the client as s/he works to achieve healthy lifestyle decision-making.[1]

Talking About Goals

Starting a conversation about goals with a teen client can be difficult. Some clients may be unsure of what a goal is. If so, be prepared to offer a clear definition and a few examples. One definition of a goal is an ambition or a desired state of being. A goal often involves a change from where a person is to where they would like to be. Goals can focus on many areas of a person's life including career, family, health, relationships, academic pursuits, and interests. Examples include graduating from high school, giving up alcohol or drugs, or becoming a more involved parent.

Clients may find the experience of talking about goals unfamiliar and uncomfortable. You may be the first adult to express interest in hearing about their hopes and dreams for their future — or to engage them in creating action plans for reaching those goals. Some clients may feel shy or embarrassed talking about their dreams and hopes, while others may feel pessimistic about their chances for the future. To encourage "dream talk," it is essential to remain open to hearing what clients are sharing with you.

Exploring the Possibilities

The purpose of "dream talk" is to learn about what clients want for their future and for the children's future. Dream talk is an opportunity for clients to think big. Because other people may discourage your clients' dreams, it is especially important for you to listen and learn without judgment. With this information, you can help clients transform their dreams into goals that they can work towards.

Asking open-ended questions is an effective way to explore dreams with your clients. You might ask, for example:

- If you could get paid to do something you love, what would it be?
- What do you think are your strongest qualities?
- How do you see yourself having fun in the future?
- How much money do you want to earn, and by what stage in your life?
- What qualities do you admire in other people?

Clients' answers to questions like these give you a glimpse into their ambitions. If a client feels uncomfortable or uninterested in talking with you about their dreams, encourage the client to write them down or share them when s/he feels comfortable.

ACTIVITY: Dream Talk

This activity helps you experience what it feels like to explore dreams. As you do the exercise, imagine how you might assist clients in formulating their goals.

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer the following questions.

1. If you could get paid to do something you love, what would it be? ____________

____

2. What do you think are your strongest qualities? ____________________________

____

3. What qualities do you admire in other people? _____________________________

____

4. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best, how do you rate where your life is right now? ____

5. What would it take to move up the scale? ________________________________

____

6. What would you like to be doing in six months that you are not doing now?

____

____

B. Client-Centered Goal-Setting

As clients talk about their hopes for their future, you can help them focus on the goals they want to concentrate on first. Sometimes, teen clients may set a high priority on goals that you think are less important than other issues they face.

Example: You have a client named Cheryl who needs dental care. She does not seem interested in addressing her health needs, but is interested in taking steps toward becoming a recording artist. You can help Cheryl by pointing out the relationship between her choices and their outcomes. You might say, "I understand that becoming a recording artist is very important to you. How do you think that not taking care of your appearance might get in the way of you fulfilling your dream of becoming a rock star?" By helping the client make connections between her choices and their consequences, you show her how the decisions she makes now can directly influence her future.

A client's ISP can include goals of high, moderate, and low priority. By including both urgent and less pressing goals, you address the client's immediate needs and risk factors while simultaneously keeping her/him engaged in the process.

- High priority areas include, but are not limited, to client safety, child safety, abuse or neglect issues, substance use, food needs, emergency medical care, shelter or housing, and threats or acts of violence.
- Moderate priority areas include important, time-sensitive though less urgent needs, such as achieving educational goals and obtaining financial security.
- Low priority areas can include a wide range of non-urgent issues.

Always address high priority needs and issues of the client first, unless client safety is at risk.

The greater your client's interest in addressing an issue, changing a behavior, or making different choices, the better her/his chances for success. However, keeping clients engaged in developing plans and working toward goals can be challenging. One technique that works with many clients is to identify their areas of strong interest, and then highlight the connections between their current actions and future results related to those interests. Talk frequently about the client's interests. Learn how the client developed them, and include goals and steps in the ISP that support those interests.

You can use a guide like the following matrix to assess clients' priority and interest levels in various issues and compare them with your own.

		INTEREST		
		High	Moderate	Low
PRIORITY	High			
	Moderate			
	Low			

Example: A client is very interested in becoming an emancipated minor and considers it a high priority. You agree to assist the client as you can, but think it is a low priority. The completed matrix looks like this:

		INTEREST Becoming an emancipated minor		
		High	Moderate	Low
PRIORITY	High	Client		
	Moderate			
	Low		Case Manager	

When you see an area as a moderate or high priority, but a client sees it as a low priority and isn't interested, the client is less likely to take action. While this can be frustrating, it is important to stay focused on what the client thinks is most important. Sometimes, it can be helpful to determine which stage of change a client is in as you think about your approach. (See pages 9-13 of Unit 2 for a discussion of the stages of change.)

For example, if a client is in pre-contemplation about using birth control, and you see this as a high priority topic, providing information can sometimes help move the client toward change. You could ask the client what information she has already, provide more client-centered information, and then check in again about her interest. If the client still isn't interested, it's time for you to let go of your agenda. This can be challenging when you think that a client is making an unhealthy decision. But sometimes learning through experience is the only way to learn, even if it's the hard way to learn. You may interrupt that learning process if you push your priority on the client. If after more discussion, your client becomes interested in using birth control, then it will be a higher priority for her. When clients make their own connections and decisions based on what *they* think is important, their actions are more meaningful and long lasting.

With the many job responsibilities you have as a case manager, it is important to work effectively and efficiently. Remember that concentrating too much energy on low-priority/low-interest areas takes time and resources away from more significant issues.

ACTIVITY: Connecting Current Decisions and Future Results

INSTRUCTIONS: Look at the following examples of different priorities, and provide a statement that might help the teen see the relationship between them.

Example: **Tracy wants to work on getting her cosmetology license. You know that she and her 2-month-old daughter do not have health insurance.**

You might say, "I know one of your long-term goals is to get your cosmetology license. What are some short-term goals that would help you to make that happen? How might getting health insurance for you and your daughter help you with your dream of getting that license?"

1. Luis is only interested in working on getting his driver's license. You are aware that he is not attending school on a regular basis.

You might help him make the connection by saying: ________________________

____

2. Minerva wants to move out of her family's house and live on her own. You know that she does not have a steady source of income.

You might help her make the connection by saying: ________________________

____

C. Developing the Plan

Once you and your client have done the important work of talking about dreams, setting goals, and choosing priorities, you are ready to begin writing the ISP. The plan should include six components:

1. SMART Goals
2. Objectives/Action Steps
3. Assignment of Responsibility for Each Step
4. Identification of Service Needs
5. Timeline
6. Progress — Measuring Success: see Chapter 3: "Following Up."

1) SMART Goals

As mentioned previously, it may be important to determine what "stage of change" the client is in before identifying goals. Ideally, a client should be in the "preparation" stage so that he/she has already thought about making the changes and is ready to move toward action.

The first part of the ISP is a description of the client's goals. Apply the SMART principle when defining goals. A SMART goal is **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ewarding and **T**imely.

Example: Valerie is an avid reader and a good student. She has noticed that a bookstore is opening nearby. Her SMART goal is, "I will get a job at Border Barns Books within two months."

Specific – the goal is clear and detailed.

Measurable – progress toward the goal can be tracked.
In the example, Valerie could create action steps to track her progress. For example, she could call about job openings while the baby is napping tomorrow.

Attainable – is challenging yet realistically reachable.
In the example, the bookstore is close to her home, and is likely to have job openings with flexible hours.

Rewarding – there is a perceived benefit or positive outcome.
In the example, Valerie will receive an income, work conveniently close to her home, receive a discount on book purchases, and may learn about the publishing field.

Timely – a timeframe is involved.
In the example, Valerie will either get the job within two months or she won't.

The goal statement is usually a short sentence or phrase. It simply and briefly describes what the client will be working toward. If it is hard for the client to state her/his goal in a single sentence or phrase, s/he may need to break the goal into several goals.

Whenever possible, use the client's own words or phrases to describe her/his goals. This helps her/him take ownership of the ISP and makes it more likely that s/he will take action toward achieving its goals.

ACTIVITY: Creating SMART Goal Statements (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Rewarding, Timely)

INSTRUCTIONS: Change the following goals into SMART goals.

Goal	SMART Goal
1. Lose weight	1.
2. Do better in school	2.
3. Take care of my children	3.

2) Objectives/Action Steps

The Maternal and Child Health Branch AFLP and ASPPP Standards use the term "objective" in its outline of what should be included in the ISP. However, it can be helpful for clients to break objectives down into small, concrete "action steps." Action steps are small units of progress which move a person toward achieving her/his goals.

Example of an objective: "Find reliable childcare so I can attend school regularly."
Example of an action step: "Call the local childcare resource and referral center."

As with setting goals, it is important to be specific about the action steps that are needed. One useful exercise is to draw a line with the goal at the end, and then map out the individual steps needed to get there. If you find that it is difficult to specify steps, make sure the stated goal is not too detailed. If it is, simplify the goal and then work backward to fill in the necessary steps.

Avoid creating action steps with too many parts. For example, if the client's goal is to avoid becoming pregnant, then one of her objectives may be to apply for MediCal. However, applying for MediCal is a multipart process and requires further breaking down. Action steps might include calling to request the necessary forms, completing the forms, and submitting them. Establishing small, doable steps rather than large, complicated steps increases the likelihood of your client's success.

Another useful strategy is to organize action steps into three-month blocks. Then when you and the client review the ISP each quarter, you will be able to quickly evaluate the progress that has been made. This provides the client with a realistic and measurable way to work toward goals.

As you list action steps, consider the possibility that unanticipated needs or issues may arise along the way. You can help clients prepare for the unexpected by talking about possible obstacles and how they might respond to them.

Incorporate into every visit a time to follow up on your client's progress toward goals. Checking off the action steps that have been taken provides a tangible way for clients to see their success.

3) Assignment of Responsibility for Each Step

The next step is to determine who will be responsible for completing each step. Usually the client has responsibility for carrying out the majority of the steps. However, as a case manager, you may know of resources in the community or have materials, information, or expertise that can support the client's progress. Therefore, you may decide to take on one or more steps in the client's ISP.

4) Identification of Service Needs

The next step in developing an ISP is to identify services that are available to address the client's unique needs and support her/his strengths. These might include a peer support groups for parenting teens, workshops in job-search skills, or smoking cessation programs at a local hospital. Ask about any previous experiences the client may have had with local resources and services. Then draw upon your own knowledge of and experience with available services to facilitate a good fit with the client. Discuss any actual or potential barriers that may make it difficult for the client to access services, such as the need for transportation or childcare. When desired services do not exist in the client's community, talk about alternative strategies to meet the need.

5) Timeline

Creating a timeline is the next step in developing an ISP. An effective timeline includes target dates for each individual action step a client must take in working toward her/his goals, as well as target dates for reaching those goals.

Some clients may be unfamiliar with the terms “timeline” or “target date,” so be prepared to offer definitions. One way to describe a timeline is as a map showing each step on the way toward a goal and the amount of time needed to complete it. A target date is a future date or time by which someone plans to complete an action.

Sometimes a target date is fixed, such as when a client has a specific appointment to attend. For example: “Carla will go to her appointment with the nutritionist on July 24.” At other times, you and the client will need to estimate the amount of time needed to complete a particular step. For example: “Andrew will enroll in the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) preparation class at the adult school within two weeks, by January 15.”

Be realistic when you estimate the amount of time needed for each step. Consider the individual client’s strengths, experiences, developmental stage, emotional maturity, and challenges. Then ask yourself, “Is this realistic and reasonable for *this* client?” Some clients will need more time than others to complete the same task. Try to stagger target dates rather than setting the same target date for several steps. This approach helps the client focus on one achievable step at a time.

Throughout your work with the client, review the timeline regularly and revise it as needed. This will help keep your client on track to achieve her/his goals.

ACTIVITY: Identifying Steps and Creating a Timeline

INSTRUCTIONS: After reading each vignette, create steps and a timeline that would lead the client to her/his goal.

Vignette 1: Jessie is 16 years old. He completed the 8th grade. He is not currently enrolled in school. His goal is to graduate from high school.

Goal: Graduate from high school by (date): ____________________________

Action Steps:

1. ____ (date: ________)
2. ____ (date: ________)
3. ____ (date: ________)
4. ____ (date: ________)
5. ____ (date: ________)

Vignette 2: Beatriz is 15 years old. She has a 3-month-old baby. She stopped smoking cigarettes at the beginning of her pregnancy and started again when her baby was 1 month old. Her goal is to quit smoking.

Goal: Quit smoking by (date): ____________________________________

Action Steps:

1. ____ (date: ________)
2. ____ (date: ________)
3. ____ (date: ________)
4. ____ (date: ________)
5. ____ (date: ________)

Developing Individual Service Plans

Things to Think About

- Who has encouraged you to dream?
- When did you first learn about setting goals?
- How would you feel if someone laughed at your dream?
- What can a person learn from not reaching a goal?
- What helps you stay on track?
- When is a dream unrealistic?

Guidelines for Practice

- ✯ Remain open.
- ✯ Be prepared to define and offer examples of goals, objectives, action steps, and timelines.
- ✯ Allow time for "dream talk."
- ✯ Incorporate assessment information when developing ISPs.
- ✯ Address high-priority needs first.
- ✯ Focus resources on moderate- and high-interest areas
- ✯ Stay SMART by helping clients set goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Rewarding, and Timely.
- ✯ Be realistic about helping clients create steps and timelines that reflect their strengths, challenges, developmental stages, and emotional maturity.
- ✯ Keep it simple, and reevaluate goals.

3. Following Up

Learning Objectives:
After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of regular follow-up
2. Describe the main components of follow-up
3. Give three examples of open-ended questions for reviewing progress
4. Discuss the value of celebrating clients' successes
5. Identify ways to motivate clients
6. Identify what you can do to manage your reactions to slow or nonexistent client follow-through

Ongoing follow-up is at the core of providing comprehensive case management. From the start, develop a practice of checking in regularly with your clients, both to find out where they stand and to report on your own progress toward the steps that have been assigned to you. This also allows you to show them that you are interested and invested in their successes. Consistent follow-up also allows you and your clients to review and revise goals, action steps, and timelines as necessary, and to celebrate progress.

A. Reviewing Progress

Just as you may be the first person to talk with your clients about their goals and dreams, you may also be the first person to talk to them about success. Success has different meanings for different people. For a client who feels stuck in her current situation, it may be taking the first step toward her goal. For a client who has few people to support him, it may be finishing a step by the target date. For a client who expresses little hope for her future, just sharing her dreams with you can be considered a success.

Setting goals and following through on action steps to reach them can be difficult for many clients, particularly when it is a new experience. Having someone to review their progress with can help clients maintain their focus, motivation, and confidence. Checking in also allows you to find out if clients have successfully connected with community services and resources that you referred them to. Without follow-up, you might miss opportunities to encourage, motivate, or coach clients through difficult moments. Often, a positive word at the right time can make the difference between success and discouragement.

When you review progress with clients, ask questions, listen, and acknowledge their experiences. Some clients may tell you about their progress and challenges without you having to ask them. With others, you will need to initiate the conversation. As often as possible, use open-ended questions to encourage clients to give broader responses.

To find out about possible changes in client need or interest, you might ask:

- What has changed for you since we created the last ISP together?
- On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how important is reaching this goal to you now?
- Looking at the action plan, what goals or steps would you like to add or take away?

To learn more about current sources of support for the client, you might ask:

- What other help or support do you need to finish your steps by the agreed upon date?
- Who in your life knows that you are working on taking these steps to reach your goals?

To talk about barriers and challenges to the client's follow-through, you might ask:

- What do you think is getting in the way of you taking these steps to reach your goals?
- In what ways do you think not taking the steps we talked about might affect your goal?
- How can we make the goals and steps SMARTer?

If a client is frustrated or disappointed with what s/he perceives as slow or nonexistent progress, acknowledge the feeling and reassure the client that there are alternate paths to success. Ask the client to clarify personal expectations. What would s/he need to accomplish to feel successful?

ACTIVITY: The Meaning of Success

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the following statements.

Mariah has been working on completing the GED for over a year. She has tried to pass the mathematics section several times now and has failed. She is feeling frustrated by her progress.

You might say: ____

____

Silvia and her 2-year-old daughter emigrated from Mexico. She speaks and understands English but cannot read or write it. She has little confidence in her ability to make it on her own.

You might say: ____

____

Kevin was recently released from jail and wants to make some positive changes in his life. He wants be more involved in the life of his 2-year-old son, whom he last saw 18 months ago. He says he has never been successful at anything.

You might say: ____

____

Clients' lives are constantly changing, so it is important to establish a regular routine for looking at how they are doing and what they need. Otherwise, goals and dreams can take a back seat to day-to-day priorities. Each time you meet with a client, touch on her/his progress toward ISP goals, even if only briefly. This helps keep the client focused and on track. Acknowledge and celebrate the client's progress. By keeping goals, dreams, and progress in the spotlight, you encourage your clients to continue the hard work of making positive changes in their lives.

B. Revising the ISP

From time to time, you and the client may need to revise the ISP to reflect changes in her/his situation. For example, if a client has successfully completed several steps toward her goal, you might revise the plan to include new and more challenging steps. Or, if a client has fulfilled some tasks but not others, you might want to break the undone tasks into smaller, doable parts. If a new need emerges for your client, or his focus shifts from one part of his life to another, that is another reason to revise the ISP.

It is not necessary to revise the ISP every time something changes for the client or her/his children. However, it is essential to record changes in the client's chart or file if the changes are in the following areas:

- Client needs
- Program status
- Resources
- Risks
- Barriers to and utilization of services

C. Motivation

As a case manager, one of the most difficult tasks you have is supporting clients who appear to be unmotivated to move beyond where they currently are. Motivation varies greatly from person to person; what leads one person to act may have no impact on another. So it is hard to understand why some clients seem to jump at the chance to improve their lives, while others move slowly or do not seem to want to change at all.

When you feel frustrated by unresponsive clients, it is useful to remember that you can have a positive impact on them just by being there for them and remaining interested in their lives. Each meeting you have with a client presents an opportunity for you to say or do something that motivates them to take action.

Helping to See Relationships Between Inaction/Delayed Action and Outcomes

One technique for inspiring movement is to help clients see the relationship between their inaction or delayed action and its outcome. The simple act of drawing a line between inaction and what can result from it can sometimes be enough to prompt forward motion. The client begins to understand the effect of her/his actions or inaction and is motivated to act.

Sharing Personal Experiences

When appropriate, sharing personal experiences that demonstrate how you dealt with a similar situation is another way to motivate action. Young clients in particular may be comforted to know that they are not alone in their experiences. Be careful not to make generalizations based on your experiences. Instead, share your story in a way that provides an opportunity for you and the client to talk about different possibilities. As discussed in Units 1 and 2 of this guide, you should only disclose personal information when it is clear that doing so would benefit your client.

Motivating Through Peers

Utilizing your clients' peers as a positive motivating source is another strategy for inspiring action. Encourage your clients to talk with other teen mothers, fathers, or non-parenting teens. Peer groups and other young people can have a significant influence on the behaviors of teen clients.

D. Saving for Another Day

No matter how much encouragement you give, some clients may not follow through on taking steps or making changes. Each time you review the ISP with a client like this, you may find yourself talking about the same steps and goals, and creating timelines and target dates that s/he never meets. Even when you adjust the action plan, the client doesn't seem to take any action toward her/his goals. What do you do?

Start by accepting the fact that now may not be the right time for this client to work on this particular issue. Clients often demonstrate through their actions when it is the right or wrong time for them to make change. Then, consider creating a "Come Back To" list with the client. This is a place to keep track of those important issues that you and the client decide to revisit at another time. (Keep in mind that high-risk situations should always be addressed immediately.) A "Come Back To" list takes the focus off areas where the client has demonstrated slow or no follow through, and instead concentrates attention on areas of higher client interest areas. By refocusing your client's energies away from an area s/he feels unmotivated about, you lessen disappointment and frustration, and increase the possibility of future success.

ACTIVITY: Creating a "Come Back To" List

INSTRUCTIONS: Think of a client you are currently working with or have worked with in the past. Write a "Come Back To" list of the areas it will be or would have been more productive to return to at another time.

Come Back To:	When:
1. ______________________________	______________________
2. ______________________________	______________________
3. ______________________________	______________________
4. ______________________________	______________________
5. ______________________________	______________________

Learning from the Process

The process of developing ISPs and tracking progress over time offers many learning opportunities for you and your clients. It allows you to learn more about who your clients are, what they think and dream about, and what is important to them. It also presents a chance for clients to learn more about themselves, the relationship between choices and outcomes, and the effort that is often involved in achieving goals.

Setting but not reaching a goal also opens the door for clients to learn new ways of doing things and find different strategies for moving forward. When clients come up short of their goals, encourage them to talk about their feelings and what they have learned from the situation.

Recognizing Your Own Feelings

Providing comprehensive case management requires a significant investment of your time and energy. It is natural to feel disappointed, frustrated, or angry when clients do not follow through with steps they have agreed to take, especially when you have worked hard to do some of the legwork. When clients seem unmotivated to make positive changes in their lives, you can become disheartened.

To be at your best and provide the most effective services, it is important to recognize what you are feeling and learn ways to manage your reactions. Otherwise, you may inadvertently respond in ways that are harmful or hurtful. Being aware of how you react when you are frustrated, disappointed, or irritated enables you to develop effective coping strategies.

ACTIVITY: Reactions

INSTRUCTIONS: Indicate with a check mark the ways you react when you are frustrated, disappointed, or irritated.

- ❏ **Withdraw (leave the scene)**
- ❏ **Become more aggressive**
- ❏ **Cry**
- ❏ **Become less available**
- ❏ **Become silent**
- ❏ **Detach ("check out" emotionally)**
- ❏ **Become more critical**
- ❏ **Withhold rewards/incentives**
- ❏ **Become more directive**
- ❏ **Give more time**
- ❏ **Wait for somebody to notice**
- ❏ **Confront others**
- ❏ **Become more passive**
- ❏ **Pretend to not care**
- ❏ **Try harder**
- ❏ **Shout**
- ❏ **Start to argue about something else**
- ❏ **Lose interest**
- ❏ **Offer more rewards/incentives**
- ❏ **Become less directive**
- ❏ **Give less time**

Developing Coping Strategies

Finding healthy strategies to cope when you are feeling disappointed or frustrated is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your clients. Talk with your coworkers to release your frustrations. Get support and feedback from your supervisor. Gain different perspectives on what you are going through by asking your colleagues to tell you about their experiences. Take time out to reflect on your clients' strengths and accomplishments. Remember that regardless of what you hope for your clients, they have the right to make decisions based on what they believe is best for them and for their children.

E. Celebrating Success

Celebrating your clients' successes can greatly enhance their continued motivation and future success. Whether that success is something as small as making a phone call to inquire about a job or as large as going for a month without a cigarette, it deserves recognition. For many clients, this may be the first time that they have made a commitment to do something and accomplished it. Taking a moment to acknowledge their progress is essential.

A celebration does not have to cost money. You can acknowledge your clients' successes in many ways:

- Make special mention of their accomplishments during your visit
- Create a certificate of recognition
- With permission, feature clients in newsletters or local newspapers
- Have an awards ceremony
- Encourage clients to share their experiences to inspire someone else
- Show the clients healthy and positive ways that they can celebrate what they have accomplished

No matter how you choose to do it, be sure to set aside time to acknowledge clients' successes. When you do, you send a message that what they are trying to do is valuable and matters.

Following Up

Things to Think About

- How do you feel when someone asks you how you are doing on something that is important to you?
- What motivates you?
- What does it take for you to make a change that you are not ready to make?
- How have people in your life influenced your decisions?
- How can you handle your negative feelings about clients appropriately?

Guidelines for Practice

- ✯ Establish a routine for reviewing progress.
- ✯ Check in often.
- ✯ Find out what is and isn't working for your clients.
- ✯ Identify areas where your clients need extra support.
- ✯ Revise ISPs to reflect changing needs.
- ✯ Note changes in your clients' needs, resources, issues, risks, and program status in their client files or ISPs.
- ✯ Acknowledge your clients' efforts.
- ✯ Celebrate your clients' successes.
- ✯ Recognize your feelings, and manage them appropriately
- ✯ Share personal experiences when appropriate.
- ✯ When a client consistently fails to follow through on a certain goal, save that goal on a "Come Back To" list for another day (except in high risk situations).

4. Supporting through Referrals

Learning Objectives:

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

1. Describe the role of referrals in case management
2. Demonstrate two ways to explore client resources
3. Explain the steps involved in making effective referrals
4. Identify the stages of participation in the referral process

A. Making Connections Happen

As a case manager, you continuously assess your clients' needs and develop strategies for meeting them. Providing referrals to appropriate resources and services is one important way that you accomplish this. Like most people, teen clients have lives that reflect a wide range of experiences, challenges, and issues. Therefore, they usually require a range of resources and services to support them. In most instances, one person or program cannot address all of a client's needs.

When you provide referrals, you help clients make connections with the services they need. In doing so, you help your clients expand and strengthen their networks of support. When clients are not involved with services outside of their relationship with you, they are more likely to feel lost or abandoned when the relationship with you ends. By having support and services in place, you help ensure that your clients will make a smooth transition at the end of the program.

Remember that your responsibilities as a case manager do not end when a successful referral has been made. To provide the most effective service to your clients, and their children you should remain available to consult with other service providers as needed.

Exploring Your Clients' Resources

A resource is a person, object, strength, skill, service, knowledge, belief, value, experience, or anything else that supports or enriches someone. Many clients do not share information about their resources because they are unaware of them.

Take some time to explore with your clients who and what supports and enriches their lives. This reinforces the idea that they have something to offer and helps them recognize that they have a foundation of support on which to build.

ACTIVITY: Exploring Your Own Resources

Sometimes reflecting on your own resources can help you facilitate this kind of exploration for your clients.

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer the following questions about yourself.

1. Who do you go to when you need help? ________________________________

____

2. Who do you get advice from when you have to make a difficult decision? ______

____

3. Who do you share your successes with? ________________________________

____

4. What do you do before you make an important decision? __________________

____

5. Who has helped you reach one of your goals? ____________________________

____

6. What experiences or qualities do you have now that will help you fulfill your future goals?

____

____

B. Referrals – Making the Connection

There are several steps to making an effective referral: researching, relaying information, facilitating the process, advocating, and following up.

Researching

Before you refer a client to a program or service, it is essential that you conduct adequate research. Otherwise, you risk wasting your clients' time and your own by referring them to programs that no longer exist or whose eligibility requirements they do not meet.

When possible, get to know programs you plan to refer to firsthand by visiting the sponsoring organization and talking with staff people and current participants. Pick up brochures and other information to distribute to your clients. Ask a representative to come to a staff meeting at your agency to discuss the program. Check back periodically to stay up-to-date on available resources, appropriate contact people, and eligibility requirements.

Since it is not feasible to contact every service provider, community resource guides and listings are helpful tools for keeping abreast of what's available. But keep in mind that these guides become outdated quickly. Find out what your agency's policies are on maintaining referrals lists.

ACTIVITY: Familiarizing Yourself with Services

INSTRUCTIONS: Think about a program or service you refer clients to. Complete the following checklist to find out how much you know about it.

Program/Agency: ____________________ Name: __________________________

Address: ___________________________ Phone number: ___________________

Contact person: _____________________

1. Type of organization:
   - ❑ County/public/governmental
   - ❑ Community-based
   - ❑ Private not-for-profit
   - ❑ Private for-profit
   - ❑ Religious organization
   - ❑ School/college/university
   - ❑ Other

2. Days and hours of operation: ____

3. Accessibility by public transportation: Bus line: __________ Other: _________

4. Eligibility requirements: ____

5. What do clients need to bring to the first appointment? ___________________

6. Current waitlist for services? ❑ Yes ❑ No How long? ____________________

7. Cost of services to clients: ____

8. Languages available: ____

9. Accessible to physically disabled persons? ❑ Yes ❑ No

10. Drop-in services available? ❑ Yes ❑ No

11. Description of services provided: ______________________________________

____

Relaying Information

Once you have gathered information about the program or service you want to refer to, discuss what you know with your client. If you have visited the agency with another client, describe the experience (without using names or other identifiers): What was the application or intake procedure like? How was the program helpful to the other client? Real information about other teen's experiences can help ease clients' fears and anxieties.

Facilitating the Process

It is frequently not enough to just give information to the client and then stand back. You may have to actively facilitate the process, at least initially. To move the referral process forward, you might:

- Make the first telephone call to obtain additional information about the services
- Sit with the client as s/he makes the first telephone call
- Review program materials with the client
- Host an introductory meeting between the client and a program representative
- Help the client write down questions to ask program staff
- Rehearse with the client what s/he will say during the first meeting
- Accompany the client to the program orientation
- Make arrangements for the client to go with another client on the first day
- Role-play possible scenarios

Remember that meeting new people and being in unfamiliar situations is uncomfortable for many people. You can increase the chance that a referral will be successful by working with your client to prepare for the experience.

It is not unusual for a case manager to do a lot of legwork at the beginning of a relationship with a client, as the client learns about the case manager's role and the types of services that are offered. The case manager may even initially take on more tasks than the client. However, it is important not to get stuck in the role of "doing for" the client. How you establish boundaries at the start of your relationship with a client sets the tone for how you will work together throughout your relationship. (See page 3 of Unit 2 for a discussion of setting professional boundaries.) From the beginning, clearly communicate your expectations about the client's participation, as well as your own. Explain that your role is to support and assist clients in doing things for themselves, not to do things for them.

ACTIVITY: Moving the Referral Process Forward

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following vignettes, and then write what you would do to facilitate the process.

Vignette 1: **Angela says she doesn't know what questions to ask the child care provider when she goes to check out the center next week.**

What would you do? ____

____

Vignette 2: **Gustavo tells you that he called the child support division for information last week, but he spoke with someone who was "rude," and he hung up before getting any information. He says he's "sick of it" and won't call again.**

What would you do? ____

____

Progressive Participation

Referrals are only successful when clients are interested and participate in the process. It can be useful to think about client involvement in the referral process as a continuum. At one end is no client participation, and at the other end is full client participation.

No client participation ●————————● Full client participation

While the ultimate goal is full client participation, you will need to take on more action steps at the beginning of your relationships with some clients. Over time, and with experience, many of these clients will assume more responsibility, while you assume less and less. But some clients will remain closer to the "no client participation" end of the continuum, in spite of your ongoing encouragement and support.

The chart below offers one way to think about your evolving role:

Doing tasks for the client ➞ Doing tasks with the client ➞ Coaching

In the first stage, you take care of many tasks for the client, as s/he learns about the program and becomes more comfortable. In the second stage, you work on tasks with the client, with the client assuming more tasks and responsibilities, while you guide and assist. In the coaching stage, the client takes on most or all of the tasks, and you provide support, encouragement, and assistance as needed.

Moving between stages is natural, as you address changes in your client's circumstances.

Example: Berta is self-sufficient and typically needs only occasional coaching to complete action steps. But after her mother is diagnosed with cancer, she becomes depressed and has a hard time following through. She needs your help to get through this crisis. You make some phone calls for her, accompany her to a counselor visit, and support her follow-up plan. Once Berta gets more information about her mother's illness and learns that it is treatable, she starts to feel better and returns to needing only occasional coaching as she works toward her goals.

ACTIVITY: Evaluating Client Participation

INSTRUCTIONS: Think about a client you are working with. Indicate where you think s/he is on the participation continuum. Describe her/his participation and your own participation. (If you are not currently seeing clients, think of a past client.)

No participation • 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 • **Full participation**

The client's current level of participation is: __________

My current level of participation is: __________

The client participates by: ____

____

I participate by: ____

____

As the client moves along the continuum, s/he participates by: ________________

____

As I move along the continuum with the client, I participate by: _______________

____

Advocating

Sometimes, in spite of everything you do make a successful referral, your client encounters an obstacle to receiving services, such as a policy change, time delay, or processing error. If this happens, you may need to advocate on the client's behalf. Make sure you have enough information and a clear understanding of the issues before jumping in. In some situations, the best way you can assist the client is to find someone with the right expertise who can advocate on the client's behalf.

Following Up

After making a referral, it is important to check in regularly with both your client and the program staff. This enables you to confirm that the referral is appropriate. Find out from the program staff if your client is using the services they provide. If not, initiate a conversation with your client about the barriers and difficulties s/he may be experiencing. Find out from your client if the services provided are helpful to her/him. If not, you may need to make a new referral.

Supporting Through Referrals

Things to Think About

- What resources enrich your life?
- How does it feel when you are referred to a program or agency by a person who has firsthand experience with it?
- What skills and qualities does an effective coach have?
- When is it appropriate to advocate on a client's behalf?
- When is a referral successful?

Guidelines for Practice

- ✯ Explore clients' current resources.
- ✯ Help clients expand their networks of support.
- ✯ Partner with others to best meet client needs.
- ✯ Stay up-to-date on available community resources.
- ✯ Get to know services and programs firsthand.
- ✯ Refer based on a thorough assessment of factors including client motivation.
- ✯ Facilitate the referral process.
- ✯ Advocate when appropriate.
- ✯ Follow up regularly.
- ✯ Help clients move along the progressive participation continuum.

5. Putting It All Together

In this last activity of Unit 4, you have the opportunity to take what you have learned from each chapter and apply it to a role-play or real-life client contact. This skill-building component of the unit allows your supervisor to observe your new skills, using a checklist as a guide, and give you feedback. It is up to you and your supervisor to decide whether you will be observed during a role-play or an actual client visit.

Before you begin, read through the three vignettes that follow and discuss at least one with your supervisor. Next, try to answer the *Questions for the Case Manager* that follow. You will also want to familiarize yourself with the *Observation Skills Checklist for Supervisors* that your supervisor will use when watching your role-play or client session.

If you are going to do a role-play:
Doing a role-play gives you the chance to practice skills and get feedback from your supervisor before you begin seeing clients. Decide with your supervisor which vignette is appropriate for you. Choose a coworker to play the role of the client. Remember that some of the *Questions for the Case Manager* should be completed before the role-play. Others will need to be answered afterward. Decide how much time you want to complete the role-play. Your supervisor should use the *Observation Skills Checklist for Supervisors* to evaluate your role-play and write down observations. If you or your supervisor is not satisfied with the session, you may decide to do an additional role-play or create your own scenario.

If you are seeing a client:
If you are ready to actually see a client, make arrangements with your supervisor to observe the session. Remember to look over the *Questions for the Case Manager* (below) before the session. Your supervisor should evaluate the session using the *Observation Skills Checklist for Supervisors*.

Questions for the Case Manager:

1. What is your initial assessment of the client's strengths, resources, needs, and challenges?
2. Which areas, if any, require immediate attention?
3. What additional information do you need to make a clear and accurate assessment?
4. From what sources might you gather this information?
5. When will you begin the conversation about dreams and goals?
6. How will you encourage the client to talk about dreams and goals?

7. How will you explore the client's resources?
8. What community resources might you partner with to meet the client's needs?
9. How will you decide which areas to focus on?
10. How will you help the client stay on track to reach her/his goals?

Vignettes

Imani (AFLP)

Imani is 14 years old. She and her 5-week-old daughter live with Imani's 70-year-old grandmother in a one-bedroom apartment. Imani's parents are deceased. She has a younger brother who lives with his stepmother. The baby's father recently moved out-of-state. You visit Imani at home for the first time and notice that one of the front apartment windows is broken. There is furniture in the home, and there appears to be electricity, running water, and heating. The front curtains are closed. Imani's grandmother is at home, but in her room when you arrive for the visit. The baby is asleep on the couch while you and Imani talk. Imani attended program for pregnant and parenting students before she had her baby and wants to be in independent study when she returns to school.

Eric (AFLP)

Eric is 16 years old. He and his girlfriend are expecting their first child in 6 months. Eric lives with his father and his 14-year-old brother. To prepare for the baby, Eric is working for his father in his construction business instead of going to school. Business is slow, so Eric spends most of his time with his girlfriend or with his friends. Eric says he doesn't know what to expect when the baby comes, but doesn't think much will change. His father expects Eric to work while his girlfriend takes care of the baby. You and Eric have your first meeting at your office, because it's close to one of the projects where Eric is working. When you go to Eric's house for the next visit, he isn't home.

Luz (ASPPP)

Luz is 12 years old. She lives with her parents, her 10-year-old brother, and her 9-year-old sister. Her 17-year-old sister, her sister's "husband," and their 3-year-old son live in their own apartment. Luz shares a bedroom with her younger sister. When you visit the family's home, you see photos and decorations on the walls. Luz' mother sits with you during the entire visit. Luz answers some questions herself, but her mother answers most of the questions for her. Luz is in the 6th grade and says she likes school. Her mother says Luz could be doing better in school. Luz says she really likes playing with her nephew and baby-sits sometimes. She has one friend who she sees often, but doesn't have any other friends. Her mother says she doesn't want Luz to "get in trouble like her sister."

Observation Skills Checklist for Supervisors – Unit 4

Agency ____________________________ Type of session role-play / real session (circle one)

Case Manager _______________________ Supervisor ______________________ Date ________

	Did the Case Manager:	Comments:
❑	Casually observe the client's environment?	
❑	Gather client information from a variety of sources?	
❑	Allow client to freely share dreams and hopes?	
❑	Ask open-ended questions to encourage client "dream talk"?	
❑	Clearly define goals, steps, and timelines?	
❑	Respond accurately to client questions?	
❑	Explain the purpose of talking to or exchanging information with other service providers?	
❑	Obtain client consent before speaking with other providers?	
❑	Assess the client's strengths as well as needs?	

continued on next page

Observation Skills Checklist for Supervisors – Unit 4 continued

	Did the Case Manager:	Comments:
❑	Assess the client's interests and priority levels?	
❑	Recognize client accomplishments?	
❑	Base her/his assessment on the available information?	
❑	Effectively prioritize and summarize next steps?	
❑	Identify areas where additional information is needed?	
❑	Address high priority areas first?	
❑	Make a note of areas for further follow-up?	

Case Manager Strengths: ____

____

Congratulations!

You have completed Unit 4!

UNIT 4: Assessment and ISPs – Pre-Test

1. Circle the true statement(s):
   As a case manager, your assessment begins....
   a. At the moment you first receive information about a client.
   b. When you first meet the client in person.
   c. When you first talk with the client on the phone.
   d. When you have met and completed the intake.

2. Circle all the main processes for gathering information about a client:
   a. Intake
   b. Comprehensive baseline assessment
   c. Talking with other service providers
   d. Talking privately with family members

3. Circle the true statement(s):
   When using other service providers as information sources, it is important to...
   a. Reassure clients that you will only share information with his/her written consent.
   b. Pay special attention to maintaining client confidentiality.
   c. Fully answer all the questions asked by the other provider.
   d. Explain to the client your reasons for wanting to share information.

4. When you are trying to prioritize the information gathered from a client, which question(s) would be important to ask yourself?
   a. "Does this information pertain to the safety of the client, her children, or others?
   b. "How does this information support the client's progress toward his/her goals?"
   c. "How can I enroll the client's siblings in ASPPP?"
   d. How does this information change my assessment of the client's needs, strengths, resources, supports and challenges?

5. Which of these are components of ISP development?
   a. SMART Goals
   b. Objectives/action steps
   c. Establishing client priorities for clients
   d. Establishing timelines
   e. Measuring success
   f. Deciding who is responsible for which steps

6. True or False (circle one)
   Objectives and action steps are very similar but action steps are smaller units of progress than objectives.

7. Find the ISP component that is the best match for each example:

__ By the end of the school year (June 6)	a. Goals
__ Have a healthy pregnancy/baby	b. Objectives
__ Client is doing all but the initial phone call	c. Service Needs
__ Find reliable childcare	d. Timeline
__ The WIC Program	e. Progress
__ How are you doing with trying to quit smoking?	f. Roles/ Responsibilities

8. Circle all the important steps to take when a client has prioritized a goal differently than the case manager:
   a. Help the client make connections between his/her choices and the consequences of those choices.
   b. Ask other family members to encourage the client.
   c. Help the client understand how current decisions directly influence her/his future.
   d. If your efforts to increase client interest are unsuccessful, let go of your agenda.

9. True or False (circle one)
   A goal that is SMART is: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Rewarding, and Timely.

10. When a client is frustrated with slow or no progress toward his/her goals, it is a good idea to: (circle all that apply)
    a. Acknowledge his/her feelings.
    b. Question his/her commitment to the program.
    c. Offer other ways for the client to define success.
    d. Explore past history with successes and failures.

11. Referrals are important when providing case management services because: (circle all that apply)
    a. Linking clients with appropriate resources/services will help address their needs and accomplish goals.
    b. It provides an opportunity for a client to practice being responsible.
    c. It discourages the client from becoming too dependent on you and your agency.
    d. Successful linkages may expand the client's support network.

12. True or False (circle one)
    A "client resource" can be broadly defined as anything that supports or enriches him or her.

13. Which of the following would be helpful to motivate clients toward their goals? (circle all that apply)
    a. Help clients see the relationship between their delayed action and the outcome.
    b. Appropriately share your own or others relevant personal experiences so they don't feel alone.
    c. Only reschedule a visit when the client has accomplished his/her goal.
    d. Encourage clients to talk with other pregnant/parenting teens in similar situations.

14. True or False (circle one)
    It is generally appropriate to celebrate client successes publicly.

15. Complete the following sentence:
    It is generally good to review the ISP with each client at least....
    a. Every home visit
    b. Monthly
    c. Every other month
    d. Quarterly

UNIT 4: Assessment and ISPs – Post-Test

1. Circle the true statement(s):
   As a case manager, your assessment begins....
   a. At the moment you first receive information about a client.
   b. When you first meet the client in person.
   c. When you first talk with the client on the phone.
   d. When you have met and completed the intake.

2. Circle all the main processes for gathering information about a client:
   a. Intake
   b. Comprehensive baseline assessment
   c. Talking with other service providers
   d. Talking privately with family members

3. Circle the true statement(s):
   When using other service providers as information sources, it is important to...
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5. Which of these are components of ISP development?
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__ How are you doing with trying to quit smoking?	f. Roles/ Responsibilities

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    c. Every other month
    d. Quarterly

UNIT 4: Assessment and ISPs – Supervisor Sign-off Sheet

Case Manager's Name ______________________________
Supervisor's Name ______________________________
Agency ______________________________
Supervisor's Phone______________________________ Date__________

Activity	Page #	Supervisor Initials	Date Completed
Client Assessment			
Using Multiple Information Sources	6		
Using Your Senses	9		
Making an Assessment	12		
Developing Individual Service Plans			
Dream Talk	17		
Connecting Current Decisions and Future Results	21		
Creating SMART Goal Statements	23		
Identifying Steps and Creating a Timeline	26		
Following Up			
The Meaning of Success	31		
Creating a "Come Back To" List	34		
Reactions	35		
Supporting Through Referrals			
Exploring Your Own Resources	40		
Familiarizing Yourself with Services	42		
Moving the Referral Process Forward	44		
Evaluating Client Participation	46		
Putting It All Together – Supervisor Observation	49		

Endnotes

[1] Adolescent Family Life Program Standards, California Department of Health Services, Maternal and Child Health Branch, May 2000.